

From Albright
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pages 7-12 and 4 pages
listing structures nominated
to the National Register
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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

"Probably no other group of people in the world have been so much caricatured, with so little actually known about them, as our southern mountain people."

pages 1-3
Filed in
Assessment binder
"Park Resource Use
(Historical link.)"

Alberta Pierson Hannum, in the Great Smokies and the Blue Ridge,

page 4-6,
prepared
historical link
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Assessment
"Alternative de-

Except for a brief historical moment during the American Revolution, and again during Indian removal sixty years later, the events and developments in and around the Great Smoky Mountains, did not change the course of American national development or exercise a profound influence on the development of American institutions. To the contrary, the movement of settlers into the area, the displacement of the native American culture found there, and the gradual evolution of that way of life now called "mountain culture" resulted from the great changes in American history, but caused no signal alterations by themselves. The story of the Great Smoky Mountains area is one of Indian - white contact and conflict, settlement and development of culture, and then of the creation of the great eastern National Park.

The first contact of European culture came to the Smokies about 1566 or 1567, as a Spanish exploration party, traveling north from the Gulf Coast, under the command of one Juan Pardo reached the vicinity of Franklin, North Carolina. The Spaniards made no apparent impact on the

resident Cherokees. The Cherokees, an Indian group of the Iriquoian linguistic stock, in contrast to most of the southeastern Indian tribes who spoke various versions of the Muskogean language family, had developed a sophisticated and high-level culture by the time of white contact. Numbering as high as possibly twenty to thirty thousand individuals in over sixty towns and villages, the settlements centered in four loose clusters. The "Overhill Towns" focused on the lower reaches of the Little Tennessee River and its tributaries, with a few towns on the Tellico and Hiwassee Rivers. The "Middle Towns" were found along the headwaters of the Tuckaseegee and Little Tennessee Rivers. The "valley Towns" were located near what is the present Robbinsville and Murphy in southwestern North Carolina. The "Lower Towns" were on the headwaters of the Savannah River of South Carolina and the Tugaloo River in Georgia. By about 1700 the Cherokees began to utilize European trade goods which reached them from the eastern settlements along the seaboard. This trade contact, however, did not bring them in to the wars of the early 18th Century.

Throughout the 18th Century the Cherokees remained allied with the British, as the British and French sparred for control of the Appalachians and the eastern Mississippi valley. By the 1760's and 1770's, white traders lived among the Cherokees and white contact became mere routine for the tribe. In 1775 one of American's great naturalists, William Bartram, visited the Cherokees as he examined the flora and fauna

of the Great Smoky Mountains region. During the middle 18th Century, the Cherokees generally continued to ally themselves with the British safe for their brief confederation during the French and Indian war with the Creeks and the French. A Settlement came closer to the Cherokee homeland, tensions and the inevitability of clashes ^{with the settlers} increased.

While at least one tentative try at settlement came in 1746, northeast of the park in extreme northeast Tennessee, the real stream of east Tennessee settlement began in 1770, with settlers coming primarily from central North Carolina and Virginia. These were the settlements along the Nolichucky and Watauga Rivers northeast of the Great Smoky Mountains. The first serious clashes came in 1761 during the French and Indian War, with a Cherokee victory avenged the next year ^{by} with a White victory that saw numerous Cherokee settlements burned. Following the French and Indian War the Cherokees returned to the British fold, which would bring on inevitable clashes with the colonists during the American Revolution. By the outbreak of ^{American Revolution} hostilities in 1775, the areas north, east, and southeast of the park had scattered ^{by} White settlements. With both sides so close to each other, clashes were bound to occur, and did. The summer of 1776 saw forces of settlers, aided by Virginians and South Carolinians, attacking the Cherokees who had been harassing the frontier settlements. In this campaign, 36 of the Cherokee towns were destroyed, and, at the Treaty of Long Island - an island in the Holston River - the next year, the Cherokees signed over their lands

east of the Blue Ridge. 1780 saw more Cherokee-White fighting as troops led by the old Indian-fighter John Sevier attacked Cherokee settlements in the vicinity of Tellico, Chaote and Hiwassee, all west of the park.

Forces under Sevier, and other backcountry leaders, formed to meet the British threat of 1780 in South Carolina, and helped in the defeat of the British forces attempting to subdue the backcountry. Their contribution to the victory at Kings Mountain, in October of 1780, was significant in that it helped foil the British plan for subjugation of the southern frontier and backcountry. For the region, however, the American Revolution proved to be the mechanism which broke the Cherokee control of the area and opened much more of the area to White settlement, rather than a major political event, as it was to the colonists further east.

Following the American Revolution, and major Cherokee land cessions of 1783, white settlers came into the area in increasing numbers, and in what is now eastern Tennessee various North Carolina counties were formed. Whites traveled to the area on the crude, but functional, roads pushed out from the more settled piedmont area. The major road into the region, the "Jonesboro Road," starting near the seaboard at the state capitol of New Bern, thence to Raleigh, Greensboro (passing what would become Asheville a few years later) and then into Knoxville. This road existed by the late 1780's, and became the major access route to the region.

During the post revolutionary period, the provincialism and feeling that the eastern portions of the state would never fully recognize the needs and problems of the region prompted the creation of the state of Franklin, with old Indian-fighter John Sevier as its first governor. The ill-fated state failed to merit recognition by Congress, and thus disappeared from American history, but served to provide ^{at least local} some government for the region from 1784 until 1787. 1791 saw the beginning of Cherokee cessions of land now within the park boundaries, and various treaties, such as those of 1798 and 1819 opened all of the park to white settlement. Settlement in ~~Cades~~ Cades Cove began about 1820. During this period the basic quality of life in the region formed, not to be materially changed throughout the 19th Century. The region remained primarily rural, and cities developed only slowly. Topography determined that the land units would be small, and small farmers soon formed the bulk of the population. Log cabins, resting on cleared land of 30 to 40 acres, with the necessary ancillary buildings, became the typical farmstead. Corn was grown, and pigs and cattle, grazing in the woods, rounded out by vegetable gardens, ^{determined} formed the basic diet. As small land owners, wedded to democracy and solid Andrew Jackson supporters, they had no need of slaves, and seeing competition from them in the large land units to the east, disliked slavery intensely.

The typical Appalachian culture included a desire for more and more land, and this, by the 1830's resulted in Cherokee removal to the west, Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Only the remnants of the once

mighty Cherokee remained in the area, their power gone, and their lives and economic status at the lowest in the Cherokee culture's history.

The coming of the Civil War saw the inevitable conflict in the nation mirrored in East Tennessee and ^{the} eastern North Carolina. In Tennessee, the question of whether or not to secede from the union was put to public vote and the east Tennessee regions voted 3 to 1 against secession. Although the state did, indeed secede, the new pro-Confederate government initially tried conciliatory policies with the pro-union eastern part of the state. This policy did not last too long, however, as a bizarre plot to burn key bridges, thus severing the physical connection of the east to the Confederate part of the state, to be followed by immediate occupation by federal troops thereafter, backfired. While pro-Unionists managed to burn some bridges, the federal troops did not come, and this killed conciliation as a policy. From 1861 to mid-1863, when the strength of the Confederacy in the area was severely cut, the east Tennessee area was an occupied land, strife torn and with sporadic flare-ups between the two sides.

The park itself was involved somewhat in the Civil War. The main core of the mountains in the park saw some Union-Confederate skirmishing, ^{at} sometimes involving Cherokee-Confederate troops. A small battle took place near Cosby, as did one at Cherokee, Cades Cove, for its part, operated a clandestine "underground railroad" for escaped Union prisoners.

Reconstruction, following the war of the rebellion, did not materially injure the area, with its limited black ~~former slave~~ population and subsistence farming.

The next major development came as the lumber industry, largely northern owned, brought railroads, lumber mills, and paper mills into the area in the 1880's. The timber industry continued to develop as the south provided more and more of the nation's lumber during the last two decades of the 19th Century and into the 20th Century. Only the coming of the park in the mid-1920's saved the ^(new) virgin stands of timber that remain today.